

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

This response is being filed with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE). Claims 1-69 have been canceled, and submitted herewith are new claims 70-86.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

Previously pending claims were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,509,797 to Johnson ("Johnson") or under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,968,291 to Baldacci ("Baldacci") or under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson and Baldacci in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,938,739 to Nilsson.

New claim 70 defines a dunnage conversion machine comprising, in part, a feeding assembly which when viewed along a longitudinal axis through the transfer region, the laterally-spaced portions of at least one gripper from each opposed member transversely overlap to bound opposing transverse sides of the path through the transfer region, while the transversely-spaced central portions are transversely spaced apart so as not to overlap each other.

Similarly, new claim 80 defines a method comprising the steps of transversely bounding the path by a pair of transversely opposed members that include at least one gripper movable through the transfer region, and laterally bounding the path by a pair of laterally-spaced portions of the at least one gripper separated by a central portion, whereby when viewed along a longitudinal axis extending through the transfer region, the central portion of the at least one gripper of one opposed member is spaced from the other opposed member.

In the previously applied references, neither Johnson nor Baldacci appear to disclose such a feeding assembly. The teeth of Johnson's gears 40a and 40b or 84, and the projections 66 and 66a on the teeth 64 of Baldacci's gears 30a and 30b, mesh and overlap across their entire width. Unlike the claimed grippers, the gear teeth disclosed in Johnson do not appear to include laterally-spaced portions that overlap and central portions that do not overlap.

These deficiencies do not appear to be overcome by Nilsson, and no reason has been found for combining the teachings of Nilsson with those of Johnson or Baldacci.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

This application is now in condition for allowance and an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8a)

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper or thing referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: January 27, 2006

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